



Tell the Truth! 2004

Media Reality ✓ Check

Press Contact:
Tim Scheiderer
(703) 683-5004
Vol. 8, No. 49
www.mrc.org

Expert Documentation of the Latest Liberal Media Bias 🌟 Thursday, October 28, 2004

Al-Qaqa Bombshells Prove Anti-Bush Media Can't Resist Trying to "Push Undecideds the Other Way"

Late Hit Proves Media's Urge to Help Kerry

On CNN's *NewsNight* Wednesday, reporter Jeff Greenfield recounted how Rush Limbaugh and other conservative pundits were dismissing the CBS-*New York Times* hype on missing explosives at al-Qaqa.

Greenfield mourned: "It is another piece of evidence that this is a campaign where the combatants and their supporters are working from a sense of reality almost totally dependent on their rooting interests."

But if the liberal media can dismiss criticism of their final-week dirty tricks as floating somewhere above reality, is it really fair to pretend they don't have strong "rooting interests"?

■ In July, *Newsweek's* Evan Thomas said on TV that the media would promote the Kerry-Edwards ticket as "young and dynamic and optimistic," and the positive coverage "is going to be worth maybe 15 points." This month on CNN, he revised the media bias bonus to five points, which might also be a decisive margin.

■ At the Democratic convention, *New York Times* columnist John Tierney asked a sample of 153 journalists to state anonymously whether they thought Kerry or Bush would be a "better president." Reporters outside the Beltway favored Kerry by a 3 to 1 margin. But even more eye-opening were the responses of the 50 Washington-based journalists, who lined up for Kerry by a lopsided 12 to 1.

■ In May, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 34 percent of national reporters surveyed described themselves as liberals, while only 7 percent said they were conservative.

■ A majority of 55 percent of reporters told Pew pollsters the media weren't critical enough of President Bush, while only 8 percent thought they were too critical. By contrast, 34 percent of the general public said the media were too critical, and 24 percent said not critical enough.

■ Here's another Pew number that might explain the great temptation for reporters to tip the scales for Kerry this year. In 1999, 52 percent of the reporters said they had "a great deal" of confidence in the public's electoral judgment. After four years of Bush, only 31 percent of the reporters had "a great deal" of confidence in the public's judgment. When voters seem to need persuading, the

media feel the need to juice up the coverage.

The New York Times tried to dismiss media critics today as the enemies of the idea of professionalism. Their news story began with liberal journalism professor Jay Rosen: "I think there's a campaign under way to totally politicize journalism and totally politicize press criticism. It's really an attack not just on the liberal media or press bias, it's an attack on professionalism itself, on the idea that there could be disinterested reporters."

That's bunk. It's up to the media professionals to prove that when the election's on the line, can they show they're disinterested? Unraveling late hits like the CBS-*New York Times* al-Qaqa story only prove the national media elite can't resist the urge to offer John Kerry what CBS's Jim Acosta yesterday called "another gift from the headlines."

— Tim Graham

Election Could Hinge on Our Hit Piece!

"After two days of relentless hammering from his Democratic opponent, the President today finally broke his silence over the missing explosives in Iraq....Mr. Bush had to say something. The timing of the story couldn't be worse for him...the President needs undecideds heading to the polls feeling strongly about his handling of national security. The missing explosives are the kind of development that could push undecideds the other way." — Jim Axelrod on the *CBS Evening News*, October 27.

For the most outrageous recent quotes, read the latest edition of *Notable Quotables* at www.mrc.org.

To schedule an interview with an MRC spokesman, please contact Tim Scheiderer at (703) 683-5004